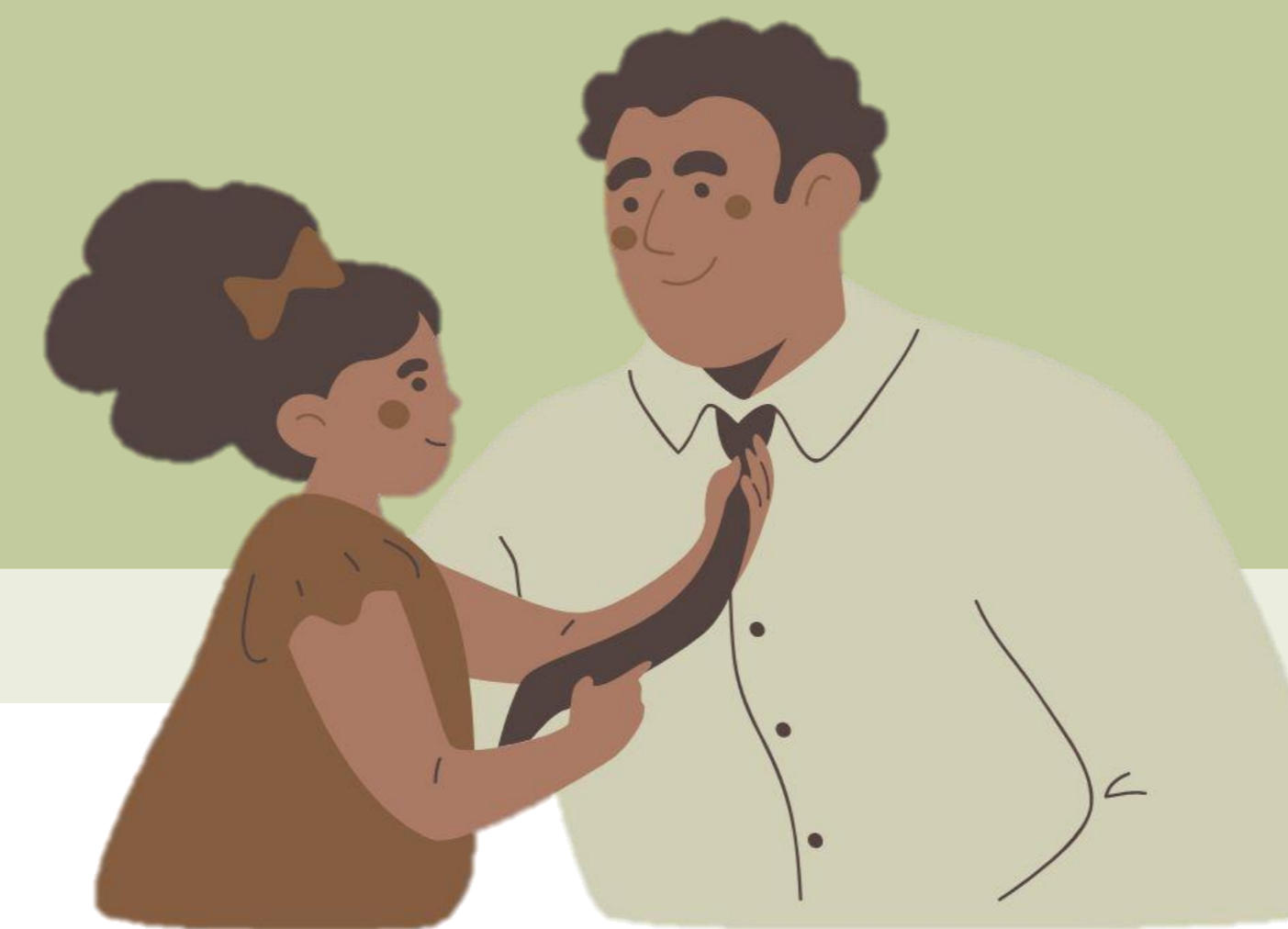# Black fathers' experiences of parental involvement with their adolescent's school education

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BACKGROUND

- The robust literature on the benefits of parental involvement in adolescent education has predominantly explored the impact of mothers(Greif & Greif, 2004). Where research exists on fathers it has often focused on absenteeism.

- There is emerging evidence that fathers have an impact on the child's cognitive, emotional, social and physical development (Allen & Daly, 2002). A meta-analysis by Kim & Hill (2015) also found that parental involvement from fathers showed a strong positive association with their child's academic achievements. Similar results showed a more pronounced effect for children of minority ethnic backgrounds (Jeynes, 2015).

- For Black (African and Caribbean) pupils in the United Kingdom; who are faced with a higher risk of educational underachievement and school exclusion, there has been little focus on the strengths of Black fathering in education outcomes for high achieving Black adolescents.

- The present study explored the experiences of school involvement of five Black (African/Caribbean) fathers of high achieving adolescents in the UK.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do Black fathers construct their role as a father and define their parenting style?

2. What are Black fathers' reflections on their experiences with school involvement pertaining to their adolescent child/children?

3. What are Black fathers' perceptions on barriers to their involvement with their high-achieving adolescent child's school and education?

METHOD

- The design consisted of an exploratory sequential mixed methods design.

- Phase one utilised questionnaires as the method of data collection. This included demographic questions as well as the Parental Involvement Project Questionnaire (PIPQ) (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) (Robinson et al., 1995) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997).

- Phase two made use of semi-structured interviews which were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

FINDINGS

Thematic Map of the 6 superordinate themes generated from the interviews through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
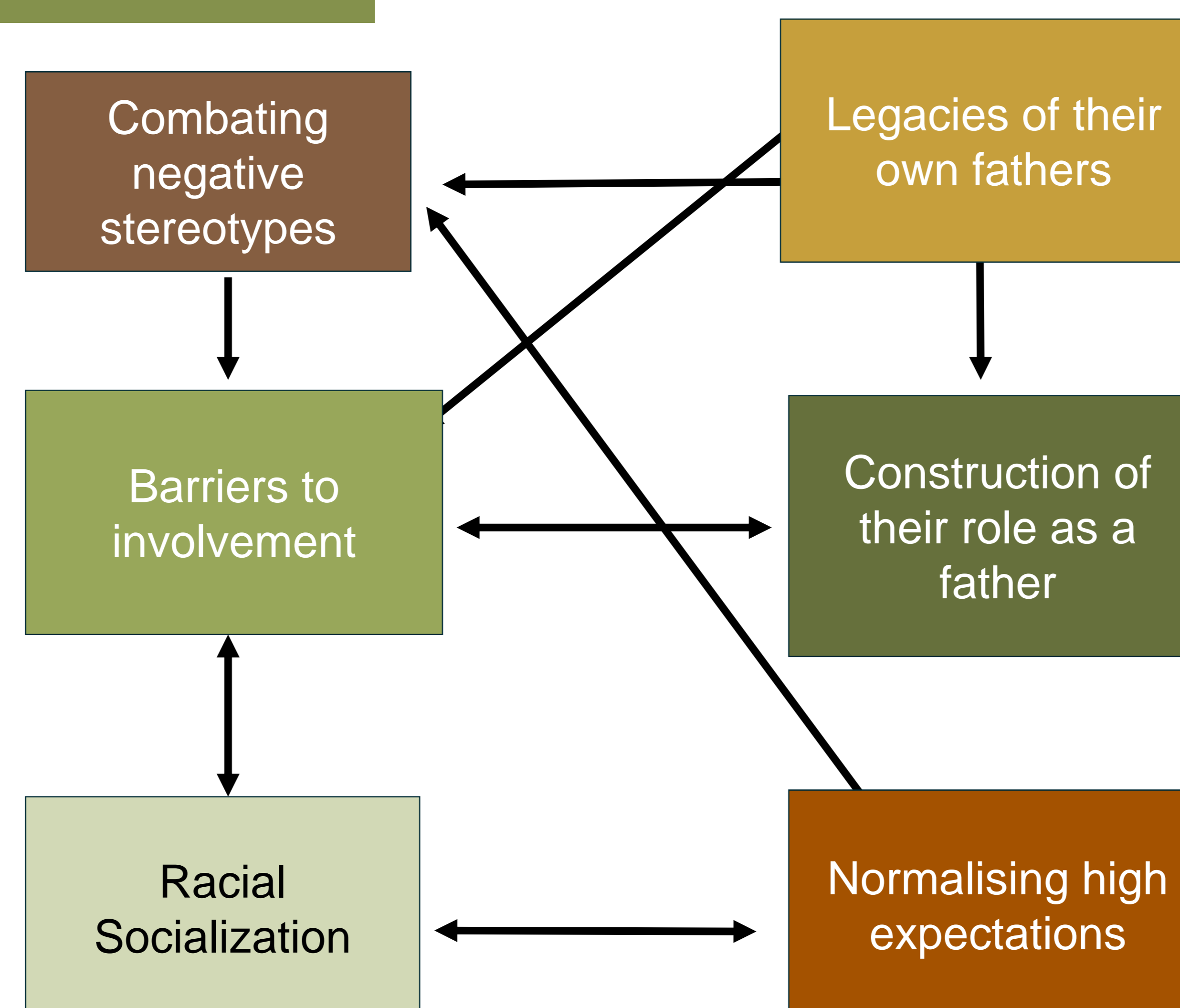
DISCUSSION

- The findings highlighted that Black fathers characterise their role in parental involvement in their adolescent's education as a balance between traditional gender parenting roles for men on being the disciplinarian and a providing a sense of nurture and encouragement.

- Their role as a father was influenced by their own experiences of being fathered and impacted on the importance placed on their responsibility for their child's academic outcomes. This was also shaped by the need to overcome negative stereotypes of absenteeism about Black fathers.

- The father's highlighted that racial socialization was an effective way of normalising high expectations for their children; making use of cultural literature and examples in popular culture to teach the importance of high achievement.

IMPLICATIONS

- EPs can foster the engagement of fathers and marginalised hard-to-reach groups through targeted parenting groups and interventions.

- EPs can support schools and the local authority to develop policies on behavioural management, anti-racism and inclusive curriculums and exclusion.

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